agriculture and dairy products). The entitlement would be equivalent to 10% of the average foreign exchange earned by them in the preceding three licencing years excepting for the service providers in the tourism sector. The entitlement in the case of hotels (which are three star and above) and those related to the tourism sector (registered with the Department of Tourism) would be 5% of the average foreign exchange earned by them in the preceding three licensing years. The scheme will cover only those service provider who have an average foreign exchange earning of over Rs. 10 lakhs in the preceding three licencing years.

The scheme would provide necessary impetus for export of services from India which has the competitive advantage in service sector having qualified manpower.

US for Deeper Trade and Investment Ties

3869. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the United States of America have sought deeper trade and investment ties with India describing Indo-US Economic relationship as somewhat disappointing in the present context ;

(b) if so, whether the diplomatic and political relationship between the two countries have remarkably grown in the past;

(c) whether any concrete steps in this regard have been work out;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) to what extent, trade and investment ties between the two countries are further being considered ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) Indo-US economic relations have grown significantly in the recent past. A reflection of enhanced Indo-US economic cooperation is the increase in bilateral trade. USA is India's largest trading partner and export destination. The Indian exports to USA have trebled since 1993 and doubled since 1997. Buoyancy is also seen in diplomatic and political relations between India and USA.

(c) and (d) Our Prime Minister and the US President signed a vision statement on Indo-US relations for the 21st Century in March, 2000 put-

ing forward a road map for the future. The two sides have maintained a high level of engagement to strengthen understanding and expand mutual beneficial co-operation on a wide range of bilateral, regional and internatonal issues in pursuit of their shared goal of transforming Indo-US relations. For this purpose, established a high level bilateral economic dialogue on trade policy, commerce, finance/investment, energy and environment.

(e) Enhancement of bilateral trade and investment is an ongoing and continuous process. The two sides share a commitment to further expand Indo-US trade and investment ties.

Foreign Agencies Issuing ISO Certificates

3870. SHRI B. P. SINGHAL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that there are several franchisees of Foreign Certifying Agencies issuing ISO certificates;

(b) whether such franchisees are audited by their Accreditation Council for their operations in India;

(c) if not, whether it would not dilute the norms of ISO and quality standards and thus lower the credibility of Indian ISO certifications;

(d) whether there are any guidelines issued by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) prohibiting operations of certification as well as consulting services under the same umbrella; and

(e) if so, the action Government have taken to detect the violation of the above guidelines?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYA SAGAR RAO) : (a) Yes, Sir. Government are aware of the several Franchisees of the Foreign Certifying agencies issuing ISO certificates.

(b) As per information available with Quality Council of India (QCI), an autonomous body under the Department of IPP, responsible for accredition of certification bodies in the country, certification systems of such franchisees are not being audited by their respective accreditation bodies regularly. There is no information available with QCI regarding the arrangement of such franchisees with their parent certification bodies